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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1646
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1188
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2072
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 003259

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NSC FOR EPHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2017

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SUBJECT: WEST KALIMANTAN -- DAYAK UNSEATS INCUMBENT MALAY
AS GOVERNOR

REF: JAKARTA 2732

Classified By: DepPol/C Stanley Harsha, reasons 1.4(b,d).

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: An indigenous Dayak candidate upset the favored incumbent governor, a Malay, in local elections on November 15 in West Kalimantan Province. Indonesian Democratic Struggle Party (PDI-P) candidate Cornelius Kimha trounced incumbent Usman Jafar by a margin of 12 percent in a come-from-behind victory. There have been isolated reports of unrest, but overall the province, which has a history of ethnic conflict, appears to be calm. Jafar has vowed to appeal the results. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) A SOLID TURNOUT: Voter turnout was a strong 73 percent in this first-ever direct gubernatorial election in West Kalimantan. Cornelius won 43 percent of the vote, including a majority of ballots cast in eight of 12 sub-districts. Jafar, who was supported by a coalition of parties which included Golkar, the Islamic Reform Star Party (PBR) and the Christian Prosperous Peace Party (PDS), finished second with 31 percent. Two other candidates, also ethnic Malays, divided the remaining votes.

¶3. (C) ETHNIC DIVISIONS STILL RESONATE: West Kalimantan is a province with a history of fractious ethnic politics. Dayaks, who are the original inhabitants of the area and are mainly Christians and/or animists, constitute about 40 percent of the province's population, as do Malays, who arrived more recently and are mostly Muslim. Ethnic Chinese and other groups comprise the remainder. Dayaks have traditionally been marginalized by the more prosperous Malay and ethnic Chinese. In this election, Cornelius shifted the balance by teaming up with a running mate who was an ethnic Chinese. Cornelius was already running a strong second when Pol/C visited the province in September (reftel), but reports suggest his ability to exploit Dayak resentment towards Malays may have given him the edge. Ethnic tensions rose during the campaign, and there has been one report of an arson attack on the home of a victor in one of the district elections. Overall, however, the province, which flared into violence as recently as 2001, appears so far to be calm.

¶4. (C) RESULTS TO BE CHALLENGED: Incumbent Governor Usman Jafar has vowed to challenge the result. Jafar told the press that the local election supervisory board (Panwaslu) should have completed its investigation into all allegations of fraud before the winner was announced. Given the convincing margin of victory and the fact that the other two

candidates have already recognized the result, it seems unlikely that Jafar's efforts will change the outcome.

HUME